

Dear Chairman Martin:

"Such as it is, the press has become the greatest power within the Western World, more powerful than the legislature, the executive and judiciary. One would like to ask: by whom has it been elected, and to whom is it responsible?" : Alexander Solzhenitsyn

It is past time to consider the public interest and stop these mergers.

Two questions must always be asked when there are claims of acting in the public interest.

Which public?

Whose interest?

INFORMATION CANNOT BE TOTALLY CONTAINED--but it can be limited enough to privilege tyranny--this is the current consolidation trend and it is anti-American.

From Reagan until now we have seen huge abuses and frightening government interference with independent production of information and real diversity under the false auspices of free markets--

The illusion of choice is clear to Americans, so stop this merger and any other and begin the long process of doing what is right to correct past FCC errors from FCC Chairman Fowler to present.

I am writing to challenge the Comcast/Time Warner/Adelphia merger (FCC Docket No. 05-192) and the AT&T/BellSouth merger (FCC Docket No. 06-74). Allowing the largest telecommunications company and the two largest cable companies in the United States to grow even larger does not serve the public interest.

The concentration of media power is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are increasingly falling under the control of a handful of giant corporations. The cost of broadband service also remains out of reach for many households. Americans are hungry for more competition in services. However, these mergers will only starve Americans of this needed competition.

Allowing AT&T to combine with BellSouth will give the top three broadband providers control of over half of all broadband connections in the country. At the same time, the Time Warner/Comcast/Adelphia merger will give Comcast and Time Warner increased power over entire regions of the United States, allowing rates to rise even as the digital divide continues to grow.

The FCC should block these transactions SINCE THE FCC CANNOT BE TRUSTED TO impose strict conditions to protect free speech and competition under its "public interest standard." If the FCC decides to allow either of these mergers, it should REQUIRE AND ENFORCE the following conditions:

1. Subscribers must be able to choose from competitive Internet Service Providers ("open access"). The FCC should also ensure that these companies cannot discriminate against any Internet content or rival service and that every service will be treated exactly the same ("Network Neutrality").

At least ONE FREE PROVIDER NEEDS TO BE AVAILABLE IN ALL MARKETS! This gatekeeping is destroying America and limiting vital (and yes sometimes messy) information flows and debates.

2. Companies must be required to sell broadband access separate from video and telephone service, and at the same price ("naked broadband" or "unbundling"). UNBUNDLE!

3. Any subscriber must be able to connect any device to the network (such as a Wi-Fi router) that does not harm the network.

4. Take steps to protect public access programming ("PEG"). Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments. Likewise, telecommunications giants — like AT&T — are trying to eliminate the remaining vestiges of effective local oversight and control altogether. ENFORCE THIS!

5. Independent programmers must be able to reach subscribers. We are required to buy channels we don't want or need because providers of video service bundle them together. UNBUNDLE!

6. Any company that owns both programming and video systems should be required to provide competitors with access to their regional sports and other programming needed to offer competing services, so consumers will still have real choices.

The illusion of valuable information flows in the U.S. is harmful to participatory democracy and needs to be corrected. Americans will find a way to stop the trend to erode our freedoms by enabling corporatocracy eventually, but for now--it is your responsibility and patriotic duty to promote the public interest.

In conclusion, I ask the FCC to consider the interests of the people like me who pay the cable, telephone and broadband bills and watch the programming. Many of us already have enough trouble

trying to afford broadband or cable TV. Please don't make it even harder for us to find competitors, or make it easier for Comcast, Time Warner and AT&T to raise prices or block local and independent voices.

The public trust, national security interests, and vital information necessary to the public should be protected FROM the corporatocracies now limiting information to average citizens. DO WHAT IS RIGHT!

AND PLEASE DO NOT INSULT US AGAIN BY ALLOWING CORPORATE VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE IN ANY OF THE ABOVE LIMITATIONS.

Instead, please fund an enforcement arm of the FCC that will proactively look to the public's interests!